

Searle's goal decides Floodlight League 'crunch' game

TWO TO GO, BUT WANDERERS HOME AND DRY IN SECTION B

Wycombe Wanderers 1
Maidenhead United 0

MAIDENHEAD UTD'S late bid to snatch the Section B title faltered once and for all in Tuesday evening's crunch game with reigning Premier Floodlight League champions, Wycombe Wanderers at Loakes Park.

Wycombe, who have looked set since the beginning to head their eight-strong group, still hold two games in store before completing their programme. But they entertain Wealdstone next Wednesday and then visit Chesham United with the comforting knowledge that a place in the semi-finals is already assured.

They now just wait to hear

which club heads Section A, before booking their coach for the trip between them and the final.

Maidenhead travelled to Wycombe realising that victory, and nothing less, was essential if they were to keep an interest in the competition. Yet, on a damp night lacking atmosphere despite a crowd of over 1,100, there was very little to raise the blood pressure of anyone — whether Wycombe or Maidenhead.

Indeed the deciding goal and

the action which led to it, rated as one of the precious few moments of magic in 90 mundane minutes, for the most part, devoid of the urgency associated with such a vital fixture.

Fittingly it came about through Johnny Hutchinson, whose welcome zest and industry on the wings couldn't help but stand out under the circumstances.

"Hutch" worked his route around two defenders on the left flank before centring to top

striker Keith Searle, standing neatly positioned inside the Magpies' box to head the ball under 'keeper Spittle's body after 40 minutes.

The second period, won territorially by the visitors, gave ample scope for the Wycombe defence to convince onlookers that it's balance and cohesion had improved on recent displays. But it also showed the lack of penetration Maidenhead carried upfront.

With allied counties strikers Mick Chatterton and Brian

Woozley joining centre forward Terry Fancett more punch been expected of them. Instead it was left to Woozley, recently made a successful debut for Berks and Bucks offer their first shot at the goal — and that came as late as the 35th minute, and way beam.

Even after the interval, when pressing for much of the time they managed few convincing goal attempts, and those leaked through were counted by Kevin O'Brien quite comfortably.

Each of the rivals fielded a relatively strong cross section of their playing strength although Wanderers had to without Olympic men Paul Fuschillo and Pritchard.

United included forward Wanderer Dave Thomas — sound influence in their defence — and Jim Hartridge, brother of Wycombe's Les — and domineering centre half — had Keith Searle tamed when he came to aerial combat.

Wycombe in fact had to content themselves with second in the air but still persisted in employing the high ball.

The Isthmians, backed by a 0 victory at York Road earlier in the season, went straight after the double and took first half honours. Hutchinson tried to finish off a near miss recorded a near miss. Tony Horseman's cross in first minute.

BLOCKED

Spittle blocked a Horseman effort at point blank range after 7 minutes and Iain MacL tried to catch the opposition with a typical long range shot that went wide but near enough to worry them.

After making the goal Searle, Hutchinson went a one for himself, but shot before and again after half time he shot wide across goal missing by inches each time.

M.W.

WYCOMBE WANDERERS:
O'Brien, I. MacLean, C. Gale, Randle, J. Delaney, V. Faulk, B. Bremer, B. Baker, K. Searle, Horseman, J. Hutchinson. Sub.: Blunt (not used).

MAIDENHEAD UNITED:
Spittle, B. Pitts, D. Thomas, Montague, J. Hartridge, D. Woodward, B. Woozley, M. Scott, Fancett, M. Chatterton, P. Horseman. Sub.: P. Stonell (not used).

Referee: J. Griffiths (Oxford).

Official paying attendance: 1,100.

Goalscorer: Wycombe — Searle (40).